

An Introduction to the Life of Eduardo Bonnín and the History of Cursillo

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Cursillos in Christianity

“The Cursillos in Christianity Movement is present in the history of the contemporary Church as an important contribution of the lay faithful who contribute in their way to the great task of evangelization. Cursillo is characterized by the beauty of the first encounter with Christ, the sacraments, and the non-negotiable mission of testimony of the Joy of the Gospel.”

“The most prominent layman in this foundational period and who would later travel the world in support of many Cursillo communities was Eduardo Bonnín.”

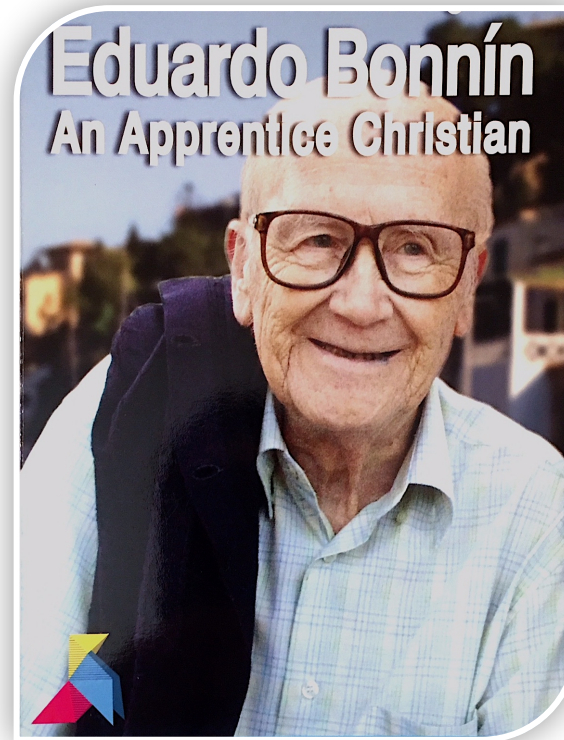
(100 Years Preface, page xi)

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EDUARDO BONNÍN

Founder of Cursillo

- Born **May 4, 1917**, in Palma, Mallorca.
- Dedicated his life to Cursillo.
- Served 9 years in the Military.
- Never married.
- Loved to read.
- Intense religious and academic formation.
- A restless young man with a great sense of leadership.

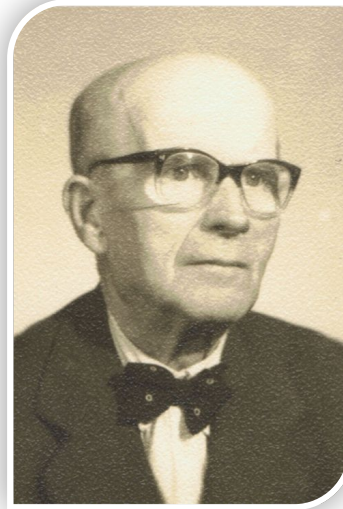


*Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló was, as he said, an "**Apprentice Christian**", dedicated his life to the proclamation of God's love, valuing people, and going beyond friendship. Eduardo devoted his entire life to Cursillo.*

FOUNDER

Parents & Siblings

- Father: Fernando Bonnín Piña
- Mother: Mercedes Aguiló Forteza
- 2nd of 10 children
- Brother became a Priest
- Sister became a vowed religious
- Eduardo, Founder of Cursillo



Faith – Family – Friendship



FOUNDER

Military Service

- **1937-1946** Eduardo served 9 years in the Army.
- Eduardo realized the men in the barracks had no knowledge of doctrine.
- He considered these men to be “far away” from Christ and his Church.
- Eduardo understood the urgency to let the men know, through friendship, that God loved them.



From what he observed, lived, and learned and his concern for the person and friendship, Eduardo saw an opportunity through this experience of the barracks: the importance of carrying the message that "God loves us," especially to the far away, the "others," the unbelievers, the indifferent.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

FOUNDER

Pope Pius XII Discourse

- **1940** - This discourse highlighted the 3 principles that guided Eduardo's life:
 - ✓ Christ
 - ✓ Person
 - ✓ Friendship
- **1943** - This discourse inspired Eduardo to examine the groups of persons in the Church and the world. After this, he wrote the "Study of the Environment" rollo.
- All the rollos of Cursillo were based on this study.

"H. H. Pio XII and Catholic Action"

"From this dual aspect of his people, it is the duty of the parish priest to form a ready and agile intuition, a clear and meticulously detailed picture, we would say topographically, street by street, that is, on the one hand, of the faithful population and particularly of its most elected members, from which he could draw the elements to promote Catholic Action; and on the other, of the groups that have moved away from the practice of the Christian life. These are also sheep belonging to the parish, stray sheep; and even of these and of them in particular, you are responsible guardians, your most beloved children; and as good shepherds you should not shun work or effort to look for them, to gain them again, or grant them rest until all of them find life, life and joy, in the midst of the altar of Jesus Christ".

(Address to the parish and the President of the Quarter in Rome, February 6, 1940).

FOUNDER

Catholic Action

- **1943** - Eduardo attended a week-long Catholic Action Cursillo and later served as its president.
- After what Eduardo heard and observed at the Cursillo, he selected what could be applied to his concerns.
- From this, Eduardo began to write outlines on index cards and developed a "new method" which would later be called Cursillos in Christianity.
- Pope Pius XI created Catholic Action.



The Catholic Action Cursillos lasted a week in a very pious environment, which Eduardo said gave little importance to human interaction and had a boring environment. The message was good, but the messengers seemed boring.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

FIRST CURSILLO

- The first Cursillo was known as the Cursillo of Cala Figuera, **August 19-22, 1944.**
- The Cursillo was held in a small chalet.
- 14 candidates
- Rector: Eduardo Bonnín
- 1 Priest
- 2 Leaders

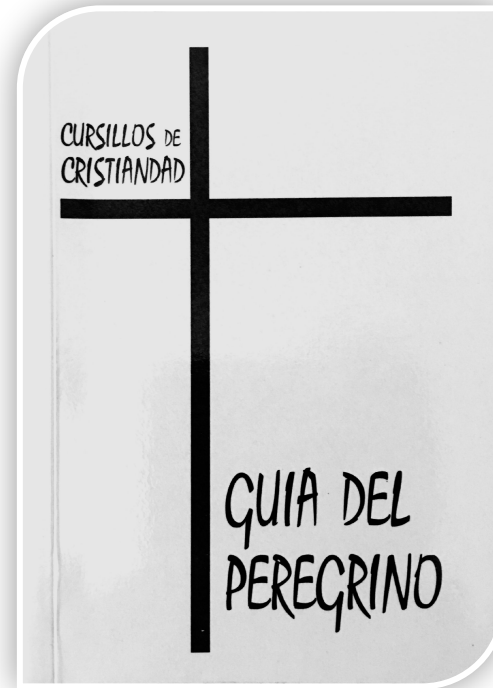


“This was the first “Cursillo Three-Day Weekend”, and although we called it “Cursillo for Pilgrim Leaders”, because we would not have been allowed to hold it under any other name. They were not like those [Catholic Action] with the same name that had been held in Mallorca up to then.”

(My Spiritual Testament)

Pilgrim's Guide

- **1948** – First edition. The Guide is published in different languages.
- The Apostolic Hour in the Pilgrim's Guide is a moment of an audience with Christ.
- Pilgrims praying with pilgrims.
- Basic prayer book designed with the “far away” person in mind.



Eduardo Bonnín tells us that the authorship of the "Pilgrim's Guide" corresponds to Fr. Sebastián Gayá. He gave body and soul to the Guide and the Apostolic Hour.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

De Colores Song

- **1949** - The “De Colores” song is introduced in Cursillo.
- Eduardo realized that things were not going well at one of the Cursillos.
- Guillermo Estalleres sang the popular song in Spain: De Colores. The Cursillo took a turn.
- The De Colores name became a “greeting” between Cursillistas, meaning to be in a state of grace.



One of Eduardo's ideas was to find songs that were not pious, but rather more traditional, so that in times of rest or uncertainty in the Cursillo, they could sing and encourage the Cursillistas.

The De Colores song and greeting are still used world-wide in Cursillos in Christianity and has become the anthem, although the Cursillo Movement has never recognized it as such, but the truth is that it identifies the Cursillista family worldwide.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Bishop Juan Hervás

- **1947** - Fr. Juan Hervás was appointed auxiliary Bishop of Mallorca.
- Bishop Hervás did not experience a Cursillo Weekend, but he did experience its fruits in the men.
- **1952** was marked with a “special blessing” for Cursillo.



*“I publicly asked Bishop Hervás if he would pronounce his approval or disapproval [of Cursillo]. I said, “If you tell us that we should stop, we will stop; and if you tell us to continue, we will continue.” I asked him three times so that everyone present would take note. Then he stood and said:
“I bless Cursillos in Christianity not with one hand, but with both.”*

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

First Numbered Cursillo

- No. 1 Cursillo was held on **January 7-10, 1949**, in San Honorato, Mallorca.
- 21 Candidates
- 1 Priest
- Rector: Eduardo Bonnín
- 4 Leaders
- Fr. Juan Capó led the Retreat phase.
- To remember this Cursillo, a plaque was placed at San Honorato.



It seems opportune to point out that up to 1949 there was one Cursillo celebrated each year. From this Cursillo in 1949, it can be said that the Cursillos “began to gain strength”, because since then several were celebrated a month. That year, there were 20 Cursillos. This was one of the reasons that the need for numbering was considered, because referencing the Cursillos began to get confusing.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Group Reunion

- **1949** - The Group Reunion emerged to enable the continuous triple encounter with self, Christ and others.
- The Group is the “personal” dimension of Cursillo.
- Intended to follow up on the Cursillo, a fundamental part of Postcursillo.
- Some opposition from clergy due to lay people meeting without the presence of a priest.



The increase of Cursillistas in 1949, led Eduardo to reflect deeply so that this influx of large numbers of Cursillistas would not hinder the groups of friendships that Eduardo considered as early as 1944 as most essential of the Post Cursillo.

Fr. Juan Capó compiled and published a book entitled, Group Reunion, Theory and Practice, using Eduardo's writings.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Ultreya

- Ultreya is a word used by the pilgrims on “the way” to the Cathedral of St. James at Compostela.
- Ultreya! Onward! Almost there!
- Ultreya is the Reunion of the Group Reunions.
- The Ultreya is the “social” dimension of Cursillo.
- The Ultreya enables the best of each person to reach as many as possible.



Weekly Ultreya in Mallorca



The rise of the Cursillos and the enthusiasm and friendship that they lived could not be left alone in the intimate and personal dimension. The Cursillistas met [at Ultreya] to share “everyone with everybody” the wonders that the Lord was making in them.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

The Desert

- **1955** - Bishop Hervás was transferred from the Diocese of Mallorca to the Diocese of Ciudad Real. Bishop Enciso Lara was appointed Bishop of Mallorca.
- **1956** – Bishop Enciso wrote a “Pastoral Letter on Cursillo” which prohibited all Cursillo activity. He did not want Cursillos in his diocese.

In 1955, there was a crucial event in the life of Eduardo Bonnin and all the Cursillistas. Bishop Hervás left Mallorca and was replaced by Bishop Enciso, who, through a pastoral letter, suspended all the activities of the Cursillo Movement in Mallorca.

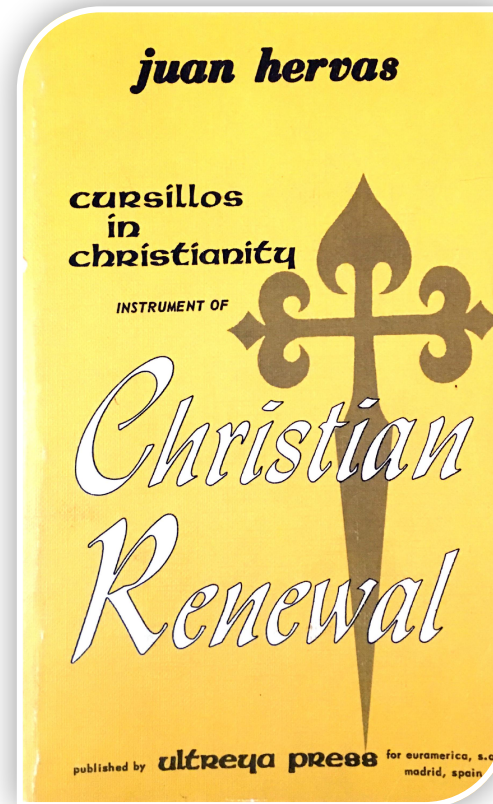
This pastoral letter "shook" Eduardo, the Cursillista family, and a good part of the religious climate of Mallorca.

Eduardo spent almost ten years in the desert, from May 1955 to September 1964.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Magna Carta of Cursillo

- **1957** - Bishop Hervás published *The Cursillos in Christianity, Instrument of Christian Renewal* from Ciudad Real.
- This was the reason why Bishop Hervás came to be considered “Bishop of the Cursillos”.
- “The most complete treatise on our movement that had been prepared up to that time” (CHM).
- Some say it is the longest Pastoral Letter ever written.



“In 1957, there was a good moment for Eduardo Bonnín. While his life was deprived of freedom, in regard to his apostolic activity in the Cursillos, and in some ways his public life, an event in Ciudad Real, where Bishop Juan Hervás had been transferred, propelled the activity of Cursillos to take new flights, although outside of Mallorca. Eduardo traveled several times to the peninsula. The desert became a catalyst.”

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Cursillos de Cursillos

- **1957** – Eduardo felt the need to design something for leaders and potential leaders of the Cursillo Movement.
- The Cursillo de Cursillos, was designed by Eduardo and friends.
- The first Cursillo de Cursillos was held in Madrid in 1957.

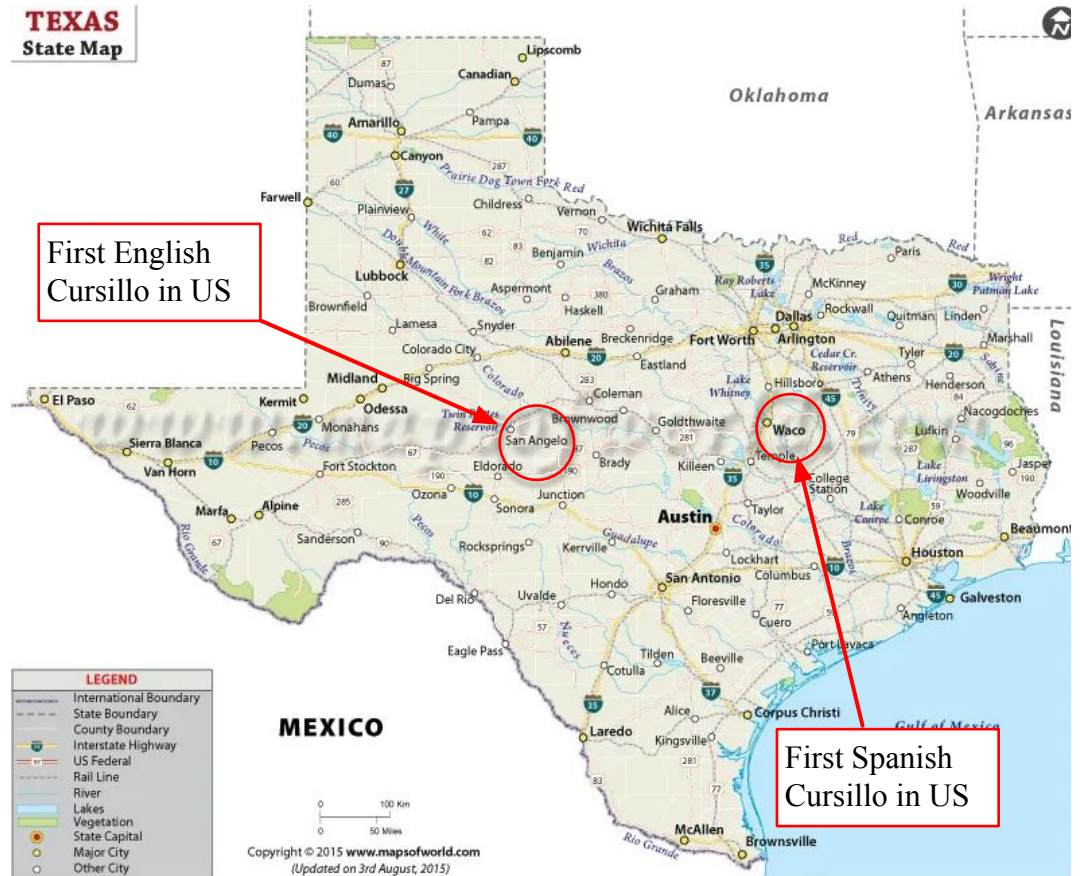


“In Bonnín’s ‘lab of ideas’ (office), we prepared all the initial outlines for the Cursillo de Cursillos. Two versions were written, one to take two days and the other, three days (both with an introductory evening) to suit the available time in each locality.”

(Cursillo History and Memory)

Cursillo in USA

- Cursillo arrives in the United States.
- **1957** - The first Cursillo in Spanish was held in Waco, TX in May 1957.
- **1961** - The first Cursillo in English was held in San Angelo, TX.



Bernardo Vadell and Agustin Palomino, two young airmen from Spain, arrived in Texas. They were stationed at the Airforce Base in Laredo, Texas. They and Fr. Gabriel Fernandez held the first Cursillo in the United States in Waco, Texas, in 1957.

(History of Cursillo, 2017)

Cursillos for Women

- From the beginning, Eduardo felt Cursillo had to be open to men and women.
- **May 1958** – First Women's Cursillo was held in Tarragona, Spain.
- Priests could not be in the pictures with the women who lived Cursillo and could not eat at the same table.



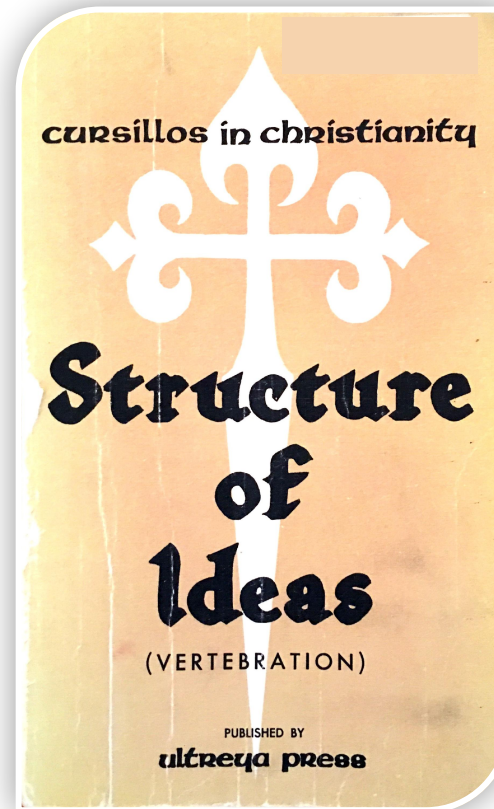
“Since the beginning, we petitioned for Cursillos for women, and suffered denials.”

“Thank goodness that by the grace of God, it was possible for a woman to speak with the Cardinal of Tarragona, and that made it possible to have Cursillos for Women.”

(Eduardo Bonnín, An Apprentice Christian)

Structure of Ideas

- **1959** – Eduardo and his friends took advantage of the lack of activity of the Cursillos to study in-depth and reflect.
- It was the right time to put in writing all that was intended with Cursillos.
- The Structure of Ideas had an enthusiastic acceptance.



“We wrote Structure of Ideas in 1959. It was a very difficult time in the history of Cursillos, in which the validity of practically every single piece and basic ideas of the Movement were discussed.”

(Structure of Ideas)

Leaders Manual

- Eduardo gathered all the outlines of Cursillo and sent them to Bishop Juan Hervás at his request.
- **1962** – Bishop Hervás and his collaborators published the Leaders Manual.



“We have always believed that one of the greatest potential benefits of our movement is to assist Christians to go from the level of rules to the level of criterion in their lives. The Leaders’ Manual was expressly designed to instill just the opposite. The Cursillos in their methodology, went from criterion to adherence to regulations. Cursillo was locked in a set of rules that could threaten the basic spirit of the Movement.”

(Cursillo History and Memory)

Eduardo's Travel

Five Continents

- 1961 – United States
- 1966 – Brazil
- 1968 - Columbia
- 1971 – Austria
- 1972 – South Korea (3)
- 1976 – Germany
- 1978 – Costa Rica
- 1995 – Ecuador
- 1996 – El Salvador
- 1997 – Angola
- 1981 – Argentina
- 1988 - Chile
- 1991 – Australia
- 1992 – Canada (7)
- 1998 – Bolivia & China

A complete list of Eduardo's travel is found in the 100 Years: Biography and Mentality book.



The seed of the Cursillos spread throughout the world and Eduardo Bonnin was traveling to insist on the Good News that God in Christ loves us and doing so with an attitude of friendship towards all the people he met. Around the world, Eduardo participated in: Cursillos, Cursillos de Cursillos, Ultreyas, Encounters and conferences.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Eduardo

and Popes

- **1985** – Eduardo met with Pope John Paul II during the Italian National Ultreya.
- **2000** - Eduardo met with Pope John Paul II.
- **2006** - Eduardo met with Pope Benedict XVI during the assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.



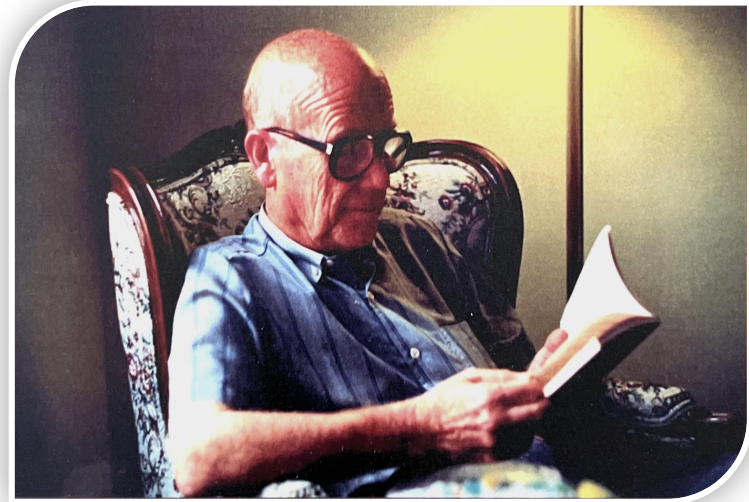
The encounters with the Popes were certainly very important moments in Eduardo's life. Eduardo emanated joy through his pores, like a child that allows all the joy of his soul to overflow. This is evident in the photos.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

Eduardo

An Avid Reader

- Eduardo was an avid reader.
- He would rather read than eat his next meal.
- Eduardo was an assiduous writer. He reminds us to be faithful to the Gospel, attentive to the person, and open to realities; to bring to life what we celebrate in faith.



Eduardo Bonnín was always a passionate reader. His office is full of books underlined with notes and references.

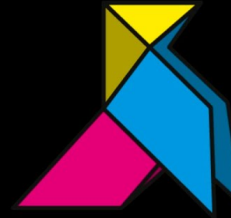
Eduardo would read books on religion, philosophy, psychology, theology, etc.

(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

FEBA

Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló

- Eduardo Bonnín and his close friends designed the non-profit Foundation.
- FEBA aims to gather, protect, and spread the works and thoughts of Eduardo Bonnín.
- FEBA is for people who want to help conserve and spread its purpose.



FUNDACIÓN EDUARDO BONNÍN AGUILÓ
FEBA

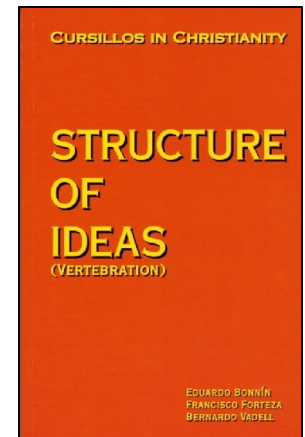
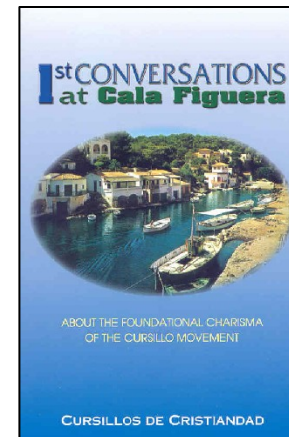
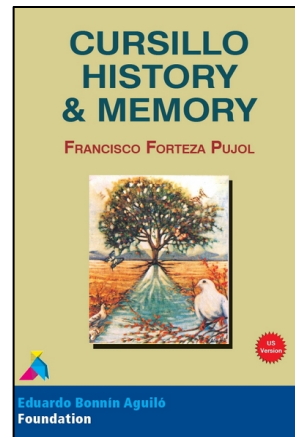
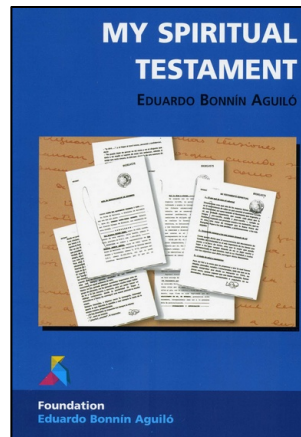
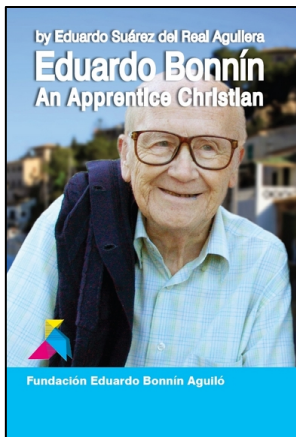
The **Foundation Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló**, or FEBA, was instituted to preserve and disseminate the wisdom and works of Eduardo Bonnín, founder of the Cursillos in Christianity Movement.

“One of my greatest assets that I possess is the knowledge of what the real Cursillos in Christianity consists of, as well as the Movement it engenders. I know by experience that when each phase: Precursillo, Cursillo, and Postcursillo, fulfill its purpose, it responds with clockwork precision to its aim, which is nothing more than to try to have the Good News of the Gospel reach as many people as possible, and preferably those furthest away”.

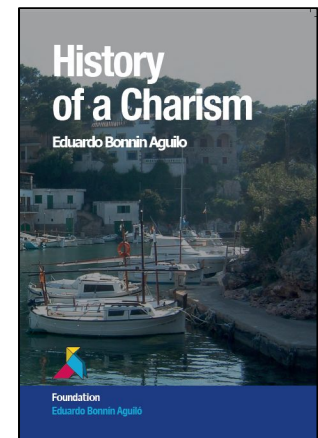
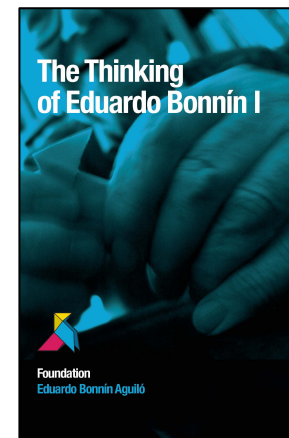
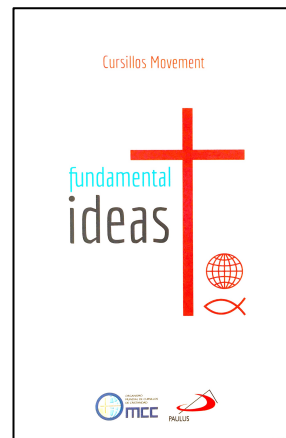
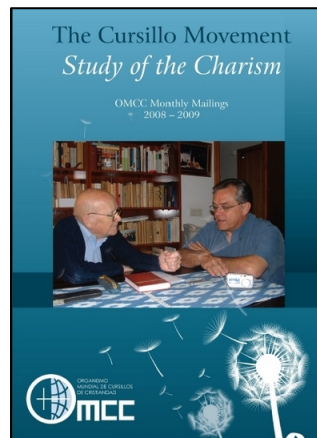
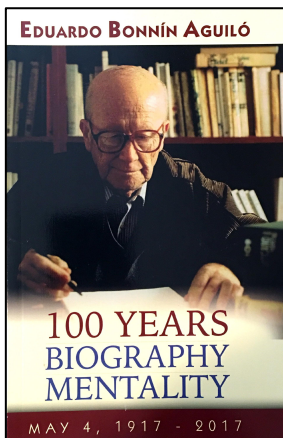
(100 Years – Biography and Mentality)

“By studying the History of Cursillo, we can go to the beginning of the timeline to those events which came from a special action of the Holy Spirit, which are called foundational events. The person that leads the foundational events is the founder. If we seek the founder and his wisdom, we will keep the Cursillo authentic as it was intended to be.

(The Importance of Studying the History of Cursillo, Maribel Gomez, 2021)



[National Cursillo Bookstore](#)





Eduardo Bonnín Aguiló
May 4, 1917 - February 6, 2008
Founder of Cursillos in Christianity
“An Apprentice Christian”

O God, dispenser of all graces and charisms,
You granted your servant, EDUARDO BONNÍN
AGUILÓ, the grace of dedicating his entire life,
with humility and generosity, to the work of the
CURSILLOS IN CHRISTIANITY MOVEMENT, as
he traveled the five continents proclaiming that
GOD IN CHRIST LOVES US.

Grant us through his intercession the favor that we
now implore Thee (name the favor being
requested).

Also, grant us the grace of his beatification for
your greater glory and the good of your Church
that shines throughout the lives of its Saints.

We beg this of You in the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ. Amen.

(End with The Lord's prayer)